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Biden appoints warmongers

By Sara Flounders

The Senate confirmation hearings for Biden’s cabinet appointees — which began the week of Jan. 18 — should serve as a sharp warning of the continuation of dangerous U.S. war policies.

The corporate media has focused on Biden’s promise to overturn many of former President Trump’s policies. But Biden pledged throughout his campaign to make “no substantial change” — and his foreign policy appointments show he meant that. Despite the media talk of justice, new policy and diversity, behind the scenes the same old U.S. militarist policies are being reinforced through Biden’s cabinet choices and their direct ties to industry funded think tanks and military contractors.

Biden’s cabinet nominations follow the failed imperialist policies of the Trump, Obama, Bush Jr., Clinton and Bush Sr. administrations of the past three decades. These choices are ominous for working people in the U.S. and for people around the world suffocating under the knee of U.S. imperialism.

The appointment and testimony of war hawk Anthony Blinken, nominated to serve as secretary of state, is one of many searing examples of Biden’s militarist stance.

Blinken, in his Jan. 19 confirmation testimony, was clear that he supports expanding imperialist war in Syria, saying: “The U.S. is not doing enough.” He is for “unrelenting pressure on North Korea [the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea]” to “cut off all resources.” He is for expanded deployment of missiles to surround and pressure China. He is for

new demands and continued sanctions on Iran. He supports continued efforts to overthrow the elected government of Venezuela. (Blinken’s full testimony is available at tinyurl.com/yyr7k58w.)

Blinken also testified: “Our commitment to Israel’s security is sacrosanct, and this is something that the president-elect feels very strongly.” He repeatedly praised Trump policy on normalizing relations between apartheid Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan, emphasizing: “There are a number of things from where I sat that the Trump administration did beyond our borders that I would applaud.” Right-wing racist South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham called Blinken an “outstanding choice.” (Washington Post, Jan. 19)

Military-industrial insiders

Blinken, a former deputy secretary of state under Obama, is well-known for trading on his past government positions to get lucrative consulting jobs with military contractors. Blinken co-founded WestExec Advisors, a secretive consulting firm for military industries like Boeing and for major banks and investment firms,



Jan. 25, 2020, Philadelphia.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

is, quite literally, the road to the Situation Room.”

WestExec partners are former government officials, military officers and diplomats. By defining themselves as “strategic consultants,” they can avoid becoming registered lobbyists or foreign agents and can thus (re)enter government service without the one-year wait required of paid lobbyists. The clients who consult with WestExec are kept secret.

Recently confirmed Biden cabinet nominee General Lloyd Austin has been affiliated with WestExec Advisors, as well as sitting on the board of one of the largest U.S. weapons manufacturers, Raytheon. Austin formerly served as commander of U.S. forces in Iraq and special forces in Syria. His appointment required a special waiver, since by U.S. law the secretary of defense must have been a civilian for the last seven years.

Avril Haines, recently confirmed as Director of National Intelligence, has also been affiliated with WestExec. As the former deputy director of the CIA, Haines headed its drone program and helped create the legal justification for targeted killings as a normalized action within U.S. foreign policy. Along with assassination by drone strikes, she supported U.S. economic sanctions that attack the nutrition and health of civilian populations of entire countries.

According to Politico News, WestExec

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The United States has no real sense of itself

By Susan Abulhawa

The author of this essay is a Palestinian writer, whose latest novel is “Against the Loveless World,” Atria, 2020.

Memes abounded on the internet in response to President-elect Biden’s remark during the Jan. 6 attempted right-wing coup. “This is not who we are,” he had said.

One of the most salient of memes was a graphic of six panels, one for each word in that sentence, each depicting an era in U.S. history: from slavery, lynchings and burning crosses to Jim Crow, police murders, mass incarceration and separation of immigrant families.

Biden’s sentiments were echoed across a nation looking on in horror at its Capitol building. It is difficult to know if Americans are ignorant of our history and reality or simply unwilling to have a hard look in the mirror. But it is clear that this country has no real sense of itself, clinging instead to notions of exceptionalism and eternal goodness.

Rather than engage in much needed national self-reflection, lawmakers and journalists doubled down, suggesting that the scenes in Washington were something foreign and un-American. Another popular phrase repeated ad nauseam was that the Capitol “looked like Baghdad.”

In fact, the Baghdad of my youth was a vibrant and beautiful tapestry of a high-functioning ancient society with deep cultural traditions, acclaimed literary and artistic outputs, self-sufficiency and strength — even after



A popular phrase repeated ad nauseam was that the Capitol ‘looked like Baghdad.’ In fact, the Baghdad before the U.S. wars was a vibrant and beautiful tapestry of a high-functioning ancient society with deep cultural traditions, acclaimed literary and artistic outputs, self-sufficiency and strength.

the CIA had engineered a coup that ultimately brought Saddam Hussein to power.

Even under her tyrants, Baghdad remained an oasis of intellectual exchange, high literacy, towering libraries and socialist ideals that met the people’s basic needs. It was only after the U.S. decimated and looted Iraq that Baghdad became what it is in the American imagination. In reality, the American image of Baghdad is simply Baghdad à la U.S. invasion.

Likewise, Libya. Once one of the most prosperous African and Arab nations, with high literacy, free health care, no homelessness, free education, free electricity and zero national debt — a U.S. invasion made Libya one of the most dangerous places in the world, where slavery, illiteracy, abuse and chaos have taken hold with no reprieve in sight.

The U.S. has sowed chaos, fear, food and water insecurity, crime and terror throughout the Global South. Those of us who know and understand this history, and present, do not see the Jan. 6 coup attempt as an aberration. It is most certainly not “like

Baghdad” or like Libya or Sudan, or any other nation of Black and Brown societies unfortunate enough to have natural resources the U.S. wanted for itself.

To be clear, what happened in Washington, D.C., was wholly American. It looked like the United States that all of the Global South knows good and well. It was, and is, indeed who we are. □



Workers World Party is a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party inside the belly of the imperialist beast. We are a multinational, multigenerational and multigendered organization that not only aims to abolish capitalism, but to build a socialist society because it’s the only way forward!

Capitalism and imperialism threaten the peoples of the world and the planet itself in the neverending quest for ever-greater profits.

Capitalism means war and austerity, racism and repression, attacks on im/migrants, misogyny, LGBTQ2S+ oppression and mistreatment of people with disabilities. It means joblessness, increasing homelessness and impoverishment and lack of hope for the future. No social problems can be solved under capitalism.

The U.S. is the richest country in the world, yet no one has a guaranteed right to shelter, food, water, health care, education or anything else — unless they can pay for it. Wages are lower than ever, and youth are saddled with seemingly insurmountable student debt, if they even make it to college. Black, Brown and Indigenous youth

Join us in the fight for socialism!

and trans people are gunned down by cops and bigots on a regular basis.

The ruthless ruling class today seeks to wipe out decades of gains and benefits won by hard-fought struggles by people’s movements. The super-rich and their political representatives have intensified their attacks on the multinational, multigender and multigenerational working class. It is time to point the blame at — and challenge — the capitalist system.

WWP fights for socialism because the working class produces all wealth in society, and this wealth should remain in their hands, not be stolen in the form of capitalist profits. The wealth workers create should be socially owned and its distribution planned to satisfy and guarantee basic human needs.

Since 1959, Workers World Party has been out in the streets defending the workers and oppressed here and worldwide. If you’re interested in Marxism, socialism and fighting for a socialist future, please contact a WWP branch near you. □

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U.S. Empire wages 30-year war against Iraq

By Ted Kelly

From the perspective of the world's youth, U.S. imperialism has been waging war on Iraq their entire lives. Iraqi children born the same year as the start of the Gulf War, who should be approaching their 31st birthdays, were killed by U.S.-imposed sanctions or bombs. This 30-year war shaped the political consciousness of an entire generation.

U.S.-Iraqi relations since 1990 are not those of two neighboring states disputing a border. It is an ongoing atrocity an empire is committing against an oppressed nation. It's Washington's project to dominate West Asia.

'New World Order,' same old colonialism

As the Soviet Union collapsed, so did the counterweight deterring imperialist encroachment against its neighbors. U.S. strategists seized on this opportunity to reconquer former imperialist colonies. Their primary goal in Iraq was to control oil resources and establish permanent bases, from which to launch military campaigns across the region.

Washington first laid the groundwork by instigating chaos and weakening local sovereign powers. To prolong the bitter Iran-Iraq War from 1980 to 1988, which claimed over a million lives, the U.S. sent weapons and cash to both sides.

Two years after that conflict ended in stalemate, the U.S. sent contradictory messages through its diplomats to Kuwait and Iraq, ratcheting up tensions while encouraging the Iraqi government to invade its neighbor to the south.

As soon as Iraqi troops crossed the border, "the trap was sprung," wrote military analyst Manilo Dinucci in *Workers World* on Jan. 21. "The United States — which had been preparing the war for some time, observing with military satellites the deployment of Iraqi forces and identifying the targets to be hit — formed an international coalition that sent a large army of 750,000 troops to the Gulf under the command of the U.S. General Norman Schwarzkopf."

This massive mobilization and devastating bombing campaign carved out a new foothold for the U.S., placing bases in Saudi Arabia, and, in the words of President George H.W. Bush, "the Gulf crisis will go down in history as the crucible of the new world order."

For the next decade, U.S. sanctions and bombings killed 1.5 million Iraqis, including 500,000 children. When questioned about this genocidal policy, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said, "We think the price is worth it."

The George W. Bush administration concocted the pretext for the next phase of reconquest and launched a full-scale invasion. Washington falsely claimed Saddam Hussein had coordinated with the planners of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and was additionally stockpiling chemical weapons — so-called weapons of mass destruction. Both claims were false.

The U.S. began bombing Baghdad on March 19, 2003, targeting the area around the Presidential Palace. Over 200,000 U.S. and British soldiers swept through the country, seized the Palace,

This massive mobilization and devastating bombing campaign of 1991 carved out a new foothold for the U.S., placing bases in Saudi Arabia, and, in the words of President George H.W. Bush, 'the Gulf crisis will go down in history as the crucible of the new world order.'

established a three-square-mile "Green Zone" in the capital and prepared for permanent occupation.

The military occupation established a puppet regime that privatized the institutions of the Iraqi state, including health care and education. They disbanded the Iraqi Republican Guard. They eliminated the institutions that kept Iraqis employed during the twelve years of sanctions.

Overnight, thousands of workers lost their only form of income. A policy known as "De-Ba'athification" imprisoned Ba'ath party members or purged them from the remaining state institutions — even those with nonpolitical jobs that required party membership, like teachers.

Various resistance forces attempted to seize control of the country's resources and hold onto some semblance of a sovereign state. U.S. occupation troops crushed them with brute force, imprisoned thousands of Iraqi workers and inflamed divisions among workers along ethnic and religious lines.

U.S.-armed death squads roamed in areas that resisted the occupation. U.S. soldiers and mercenaries committed untold numbers of atrocities. Occupation forces used so much radioactive depleted-uranium ammunition, especially in the Basra area, that children are still being born with deadly birth defects to this day.

Another million Iraqis died in the years after the 2003 invasion. Western capitalists controlled Iraq's oil fields. Hundreds of thousands of foreign soldiers patrolled the new colony.

The U.S. shifted colonial headquarters from the "Green Zone" to a newly constructed embassy complex, the largest in human history. The U.S. occupation had succeeded in erecting a massive military fortress bigger than the Vatican, right in the heart of West Asia. By 2009, 16,000 soldiers and diplomatic staff worked at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

Amid this chaos, the so-called Islamic State (I.S.) emerged. The administration of President Barack Obama used the I.S. as a pretext to resume regular air strikes, while tacitly directing I.S. fighters towards Syria in an attempt to exacerbate the civil war it had instigated there. But after years of bloodshed, a collaborative



U.S. destroys Fallujah, Iraq, in 2004.

effort on the part of Iraqis, Iranians, Hezbollah and the Syrian Army finally beat the I.S.

Although there are many fewer occupation troops than at the peak, the U.S. still has a force of about 2,500 active duty combat soldiers in Iraq and 4,000 staff at the U.S. embassy fortress. The Department of Defense employs over 6,000 "security contractors" in addition to the combat soldiers. These contractors are notorious for committing war crimes against the people of Iraq and as mercenaries are paid handsomely for it — as much as \$22,500 a month.

U.S. influence faces new challenges

At the height of its strength in the mid-20th century, the Iraqi Communist Party was the largest in the region. But despite being the longest continuously existing political party in the country, the party was severely repressed by the Saddam Hussein Ba'athist regime.

In the aftermath of the 2003 U.S. occupation, the ICP drew significant criticism for participating in the U.S.-backed client regime. In recent years, there are signs of a new opposition as Iraqi communists have formed a coalition — with supporters of Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and the Youth Movement for Change Party, among others — which won more seats than any other grouping in the parliamentary elections of 2018.

On Dec. 31, 2019, Iraqi protesters stormed the U.S. Embassy fortress in response to air strikes that destroyed weapons depots belonging to militia groups in Iraq. Protesters' successful breach of the embassy was a tremendous show of coordination and popular force and was a symbolic victory demonstrating a new spirit of resistance against the occupation.

Days later, the Trump gang ordered a drone attack, killing popular Iranian

General Qassem Soleimani and an Iraqi militia leader on Iraqi soil. Soleimani was a decisive figure in the defeat of the I.S. Millions of Iraqis and Iranians marched in protest and took to the streets to commemorate Soleimani's funeral.

Javad Zarif, Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Islamic Republic of Iran, said in an interview (posted on Facebook) that the criminal assassination of such a respected figure marked a permanent turning point for the U.S. military presence there: "The United States has to wake up to the fact that the people of this region are enraged, that the people of this region want the United States out."

People's China is another important ally of the Iraqi people through its Belt and Road Initiative. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the price of oil crashed, and Iraq's economy contracted by 12%. Iraq's state oil company struck a \$2 billion deal this month to supply the Chinese oil company ZenHua with crude petroleum for five years at a premium price and allows the Iraqi state to determine the logistics and timeline for the exchange.

International solidarity

One day, the Iraqi people's revolutionary struggle for national self-determination will drive every last occupying soldier out of Iraq. The U.S. working class has a role to play in this fight by waging our own revolutionary struggle to make it impossible for the capitalists to keep up this colonial project and to disarm the bourgeoisie and dismantle their war machine.

Simply put, the U.S. working class and the Iraqi people have a common enemy in the U.S. imperialist regime. The same system whose police murder Black children in the streets of Philadelphia sent its troops to murder Iraqi children in Fallujah, Basra, Mosul and Baghdad. □



International Action Center published this book on the crime of the U.S. sanctions on Iraq.



Highway of Death. U.S. bombs retreating Iraqi soldiers in Kuwait, 1991.

Direct action against ICE

By Mirinda Crissman

On Jan. 18, 30 anti-racist activists attacked an Immigration and Customs Enforcement office in San Francisco. They cited their solidarity with “those locked within the modern plantation system.” This band of militant anti-racists painted the walls, smashed windows and breached the inside of the building.

They explained in their statement that they plan to carry out a series of attacks in response to the ongoing brutality of the prison-industrial complex. “We carried out this attack to show everyone where abolitionists and anarchists stand. On the eve of the inauguration and the so-called transfer of power, street-level white supremacists and the state fight one another for control over all of our lives.

“We act fiercely for ourselves and our loved ones. In the unfolding chaos, there is real opportunity. The fragility of the State is on full display. We’ll continue to attack both the liberal and fascist wings of the State proactively and relentlessly, as they are mutual participants in the maintenance of exploitation and repression. In the final analysis, they are functionally the same.” (Indybay.org, Jan. 19)

Given the ongoing brutality inherent in detention centers, jails and prisons (which has only been compounded by COVID-19), it should come as no surprise that oppressed peoples are moving in mutual solidarity across the apparatus meant to isolate members of our class from one another. The brutality inherent within these institutions over the past several hundred years since their

introduction on the continent was bound to precipitate some sort of proactive rather than reactive response.

On Jan. 20, 200 protesters moved against the ICE office in Portland, Ore., calling for the abolition of the government agency. These protesters were met with tear gas, and six were arrested on federal charges. (KGW8 News, Jan. 20)

Who needs ICE?

Despite President Joe Biden immediately signing executive orders that extend protections to DACA recipients and implement a 100-day moratorium on deportations for some noncitizens, the newly inaugurated executive branch has a vested interest in continuing in the same direction as President Obama. This means mass imprisonment and



deportations in the name of “border security,” securing borders in the pursuit of profits with a murderous disregard for migrants the empire itself has caused to leave their homelands.

ICE was only created in March 2003. Humans have existed without it for most of history, and ICE has only caused real harm since its inception — in service of empire. We have before and can again live in a world where ICE does not exist — if we work toward it en masse.

Abolitionists raise the call to free them all! Solidarity with migrants! Tear down the walls! □

2021 is the Year of the Political Prisoner

By Ted Kelly

The U.S. “justice” system, like every institution of a capitalist state, is a weapon designed and wielded by the billionaires to beat workers into submission. Special bodies of armed troops, deputized by the ruling class, round up workers by the millions and contrive laws to justify locking them in dangerously toxic conditions.

This is how capitalists can extract profit from the unpaid labor of workers, while simultaneously keeping them under lock and key to prevent them from organizing to fight back. The defining feature of all U.S. instruments of class warfare is white supremacy, so the violence inflicted on the working class is disproportionately and predominantly aimed at Black, Brown and Indigenous workers.

Under these conditions, the incarceration of every worker is political in nature. The system that cages them is political — the result of carefully designed policies ratified by the state. The poor and oppressed people who fill U.S. concentration camps, whether they are called “migrant detention facilities” or “correctional facilities,” are there because of the politics of capitalism and white supremacy.

But the term “political prisoner” has special resonance, because it is used to refer to those revolutionary soldiers who were specifically targeted for threatening the existence of this rotten, unjust system. Many of them are members of revolutionary organizations that the state sought to destroy through subterfuge, assassinations and frame-ups.

To identify an incarcerated worker

as a political prisoner is to say that the state went to extraordinary lengths and expended special resources to concoct a reason to lock them away from their comrades and community. Political prisoners are prisoners of conscience who fight for the liberation of their nation, their people or the working class as a whole.

The FBI and other police forces in the U.S. fought viciously to kill the revolutionary character of the social upheaval of the 1960s and ’70s. Dozens of political prisoners who were ensnared in this fascist assault are still in prison to this day.

Mumia Abu-Jamal, journalist, scholar and former Black Panther, still in prison after 39 years, is perhaps the most internationally recognized political prisoner in the U.S. The slogan “Free Mumia!” is an indictment of white supremacy as a whole.

Black Liberation Army member Assata Shakur is one political prisoner who escaped execution by incarceration. The people of Cuba warmly welcomed her as an exile.

Ana Belén Montes has been in a federal prison since 2001 for providing classified information to the government of Cuba, which helped protect that socialist project from U.S. interference.

The administrations of Barack Obama and Donald J. Trump have created a whole new generation of political prisoners. Some avoided imprisonment or were released, but are still in the state’s crosshairs. They



include Red Fawn Fallis and Michael “Rattler” Markus, Oglala Lakota Water Protectors who faced off against federal troops at Standing Rock to fight for the environment and their sovereignty in 2016; Anthony Smith, a Philadelphia organizer who was targeted by the feds for his community leadership during the Black Lives Matter uprisings; and Chelsea Manning, who was convicted of espionage after she publicly exposed proof of U.S. war crimes in Iraq.

And outside North America, the U.S. and its proxies lock up those leaders who endanger its most important imperialist projects, most notably in Palestine—where Zionist occupation forces currently have Ahmad Sa’adat, Georges Ibrahim Abdallah, Tareq Matar, Khalida Jarrar, Khitam Saafin and Mays Abu Ghosh in custody.

‘Let’s get it done in ’21’

Since mass incarceration is a form of class warfare, another way to characterize political prisoners is as prisoners of war. This is one way elder revolutionaries were characterized in a recent statement issued jointly from the Safiya Bukhari-Albert Nuh Washington Foundation, the Guillermo Morales/Assata Shakur Community & Student Center, the Coalition to Free Russell Maroon Shoatz “NOW,” the New York City Community Survival Program and the Universal Zulu Nation — World Department of

Community Affairs. It called upon the movement to make 2021 the “Year to Free All Captured U.S. Political Prisoners.”

“Contrary to the racist statements by today’s fascist police unions,” the statement read, “our elders are absolutely no threat to carry out physical participation in the resuming of any war between the old police forces, who not only also took part in the conflict but who still have never been charged, convicted or imprisoned for their own armed police actions, murders and illegal wars on our Black, Brown [and] Oppressed communities during the Anti-Vietnam War, Pro-African Liberation, Civil Rights, Human Rights, Black Liberation, Ecological, Educational, Cultural [and] The U.S. New Afrikan/Puerto Rican/Native American Independence Movements.”

The statement, signed by veteran Black Panther-Zulu King Sadiki “Bro. Shep” Ojore Olugbala, includes a list of 23 elder political prisoners who were born before 1955 and who must be released immediately, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic rages through the prisons. The virus has already killed 2,133 U.S. prisoners.

The crisis is only getting worse. According to the Marshall Project, over 200 prisoners have died so far this month, making January 2021 the deadliest single month so far of the coronavirus pandemic for prisoners.

Demand their immediate release!

Workers World Party demands the immediate release of all political prisoners, an urgent need for those for whom the COVID-19 virus poses a heightened risk. □

Demonstrators support ICE hunger strikers

By Arjae Red
Batavia, N.Y.

In November 2020, immigrants imprisoned at Bergen County Jail in New Jersey began a hunger strike to protest the filthy and inhumane conditions they were being housed in. Prisoners were experiencing a denial of access to water, medical care, heat and cleaning supplies. The facility had a rodent infestation that prisoners were forced to live with. And staff at the facility had blocked windows, limiting fresh air flow. The Bergen County Jail is used by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to incarcerate arrested immigrants.

Support for the hunger strike grew in and around Bergen County, with a call for the release of prisoners. In retaliation for this solidarity, prison authorities split up

the hunger strikers and transferred some to other prisons.

Rather than stopping the hunger strike, these transfers caused it to spread to the Essex County and Hudson County, N.J., and Batavia, N.Y., ICE facilities. Hunger strikers transferred to Batavia were forced into solitary confinement. Although some prisoners have decided to end the strike, many still persist as support for the prisoners grows and reaches across multiple states.

The transfer of prisoners to break up the strike not only damages the mental and social health of the prisoners, but also facilitates the spread of COVID-19 from prison to prison and into the surrounding communities. The virus hits prisoners particularly brutally, because of the lack of sanitary equipment, the

unclean environment and overcrowding.

In upstate New York, two protests were held by Justice for Migrant Families, Rochester Rapid Response Network and Abolish ICE NY-NJ and were attended by members of Workers World Party-Buffalo. On Jan. 14, demonstrators gathered outside the Buffalo ICE field office, raised the demands of the strikers and played the voices of the imprisoned over a loudspeaker.

On Jan. 19, another demonstration was held at the ICE facility in Batavia, N.Y. Protesters from Buffalo, Rochester and surrounding areas gathered to demand the release of the hunger strikers, abolition of ICE and a closure of the immigrant camps.

Kawiye Jumale, local immigrant activist and member of the Somali Bantu community—whose own brother was locked in the

Batavia ICE facility—spoke out about the injustices of the U.S. government against immigrants and refugees: “We came here thinking that we were gonna have a chance at the ‘American Dream.’ ... There ain’t no such thing as the ‘American Dream!’ We came here, and we are in the same oppressive environment. They are making money off of us!” □



WW PHOTO: ARJAE RED
Demonstrators gather outside barbed wire fence of Batavia, N.Y. ICE detention, Jan. 19

Alabama Amazon workers accelerate struggle for a union

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

At an Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Ala., 5,800 workers have won the right to vote for union representation. The National Labor Relations Board has authorized a mail-in election starting Feb. 8, with ballots due by March 29.

If a majority of workers vote yes, their victory will be a historic moment in the struggle of U.S. low-paid, part-time and gig workers against sharpening capitalist exploitation. The campaign by Bessemer workers in their “right-to-work-for-less” state is comparable in its potential to the epic union organizing of General Motors—then the world’s largest corporation—in the 1930s.

A win in this “right-to-work-for-less” Taft-Hartley Act state would establish the first-ever U.S. union within the world’s largest online retail company owned by the world’s richest centi-billionaire. Jeff Bezos. As of January 2021, Bezos’ net worth is \$190 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

Amazon is seeking to delay and obstruct the vote. The company appealed NLRB authorization of a mail-in election and is demanding workers vote in person — despite a COVID-19 positive test rate exceeding 20% in surrounding Jefferson County.

Bessemer — located next to Birmingham — is an impoverished former steel-producing town, where one-quarter of the people live in poverty. It is a majority Black city, with a 75% African American population. (worldpopulationreview.com)

The BAmazon Union, as local organizers dubbed it, seeks recognition as a local of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union. RWDSU has a significant Southern membership, with 6,000 in the Mid-South

Council based in Birmingham.

Alan Grant, an RWDSU organizer, said in a Facebook message that response to the organizing drive has been “incredible.” He described the union authorization card as being about “dignity, respect and fair treatment.” The NLRB stipulates at least 30% of workers in a unionization drive must sign cards for the Board to authorize an election.

Some two dozen unionized workers from nearby warehouses and poultry plants have strengthened organizing efforts at the warehouse. Michael Foster, a poultry plant worker, says: “I am telling them they are part of a movement that is worldwide.” By late December, more than 2,000 workers had signed cards indicating they wanted an election, the union said. (NY Times, Jan. 25)

Why Amazon workers want a union

BAmazon Union’s key goal is to gain bargaining power, especially in “safety standards, training, breaks, pay, benefits.” The workload and pace of work in Amazon warehouses is physically and mentally grueling.

The website emphasizes: “We face outrageous work quotas that have left many with illnesses and lifetime injuries. With a union contract, we can form a worker safety committee and negotiate the highest safety standards and protocols for our workplace.” (bamazonunion.org)

Amazon is especially vulnerable to organized labor action during the current pandemic. Increased online shopping makes warehouse workers more essential than ever — and gives workers more leverage and incentive to organize against the bosses. Amazon can’t stockpile packages, since a strike or job protest would spell disaster for its “instant shipping” promise.

Amazon’s anti-worker campaign will surely continue.



Union organizers talk to workers at 4:30 a.m. outside the gates of the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Ala.

The company has fired multiple workers during protests and organizing attempts. (Workers World, “Interview: Amazon worker battles billionaire Bezos,” April 7, 2020)

But Alabama has a militant tradition of worker organizing, especially by Black workers. From 1928 to 1951, the Communist Party USA organized throughout Alabama — from the Sharecroppers Union to the Metal Workers Industrial League. (Workers World, “Lessons of ‘The Hammer and the Hoe,’” Dec. 21, 2017)

On Jan. 25, the National Football League Players Association, the union that represents more than 2,000 NFL players in the U.S., endorsed the BAmazon Union drive.

BAmazon Union’s Facebook page shows that its organizing energy is spreading to other Amazon workplaces in the South. One post read: “I shared your latest video with some local Amazon workers I know who are pro-union here in Kentucky. This country needs strong unions. Now more than ever!”

It is critical to show solidarity with Alabama’s Amazon warehouse workers — and with Amazon workers organizing globally! □



Union members vs. white-supremacist Capitol mob

UNITE HERE Local 25 called on hotels in the D.C. metro area to close or permit staff to opt out of reporting to work on Inauguration Day. Black Lives Matter activists stood in solidarity with the hotel workers union out of concern for the safety of workers, especially Black and Brown workers.

Despite videos showing drunken, unmasked rioters in hotel lobbies on Jan. 6, several hotels owned by larger corporations, like Marriott, Hilton, Holiday Inn and the Hyatt, opted to remain open Jan. 20. These chains’ management worried about losing revenue, rather than guarding against harassment or dangers to their workers.

The Association of Flight Attendants — CWA (AFA-CWA) won a victory when the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced that unruly passengers will face fines and possible jail time. (tinyurl.com/y3a8hs8q) AFA-CWA International President Sara Nelson stated that anyone who participated in the “mob mentality” of the Jan. 6 riot should be placed on no-fly lists. (tinyurl.com/y3z86dvl)

Major unions unanimously condemned the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol. A few denounced it as a white-supremacist riot. Actors’ Equity proclaimed: “As a union and a democratic organization, we are appalled by this attack on the values we hold most sacred. The disgraceful scenes coming out of the nation’s capital have undermined America’s institutions and its standing in the world. Displays of the Confederate flag and other symbols of white supremacy and hate were meant to subjugate and terrorize people of color and those of certain faiths. This poison attacks the diverse membership of our union and the labor movement.” (tinyurl.com/yys4yemu)

Communication Workers (CWA) President Chris Shelton issued a statement calling white supremacy “a

poison that has been with us since the beginning of our country, and the confederate flag is its symbol, meant to subjugate and terrorize Black, Brown, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Indigenous people.” (tinyurl.com/y4tjx5y) The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU), National Nurses United (NNU), Service Employees Union (SEIU) and Electrical Workers (UE) all characterized the Capitol mob as white supremacist. (Portside.org, Jan. 7)

NYC Teamsters strike, win wage increase at Hunts Point Market

The essential frontline workers in the Bronx, N.Y., stood up to their bosses and won. Hunts Point Market is the largest wholesale food distributor in the world, the major distributor for New York, New Jersey and Connecticut and serves 49 states. As food shortages became a concern during the COVID-19 crisis, Hunts Point’s workers kept food moving during freezing winter cold and summer heat.

These workers prevented a major blow to the country’s supply chain. Their labor prevented severe chronic hunger in cities facing high rates of critically ill COVID-19 patients. Several Hunts Point workers have died from COVID, and over 300 battled the disease. These workers never received hazard pay.

The workers, all members of Teamsters Local #202, demanded a \$1 an hour raise and better health care benefits. The multimillionaire bosses first countered by offering a measly 32-cent wage increase. These same bosses received \$15 million in federal Paycheck Protection Program forgivable loans at the start of the pandemic crisis.

The workers, some with 20 years seniority, refused to put up with this inequality. Refusing to back down, the 1,400 Teamster warehouse workers and drivers hit the picket line Jan. 16, staying there 24/7, denying truck after truck an off-loading. On Jan. 18, NYC Mayor Bill DeBlasio sent in the NYPD, some in riot gear, to break the picket line.

Cops outnumbered strikers and protesters 2-to-1 and arrested six strikers for blocking the roadway. Since these essential workers are heroes, the people cried out immediately against the police action. Respect and support for the strikers grew, and hundreds of supporters joined the picket line, as other unions and organizations

(including Workers World) showed solidarity.

As shipments of potatoes and onions for McDonald’s sat unloaded, the Hunts Point Market management conceded on Jan. 23, offering workers a 70-cents-an-hour raise in the first year, with a \$1.85 bump by the third year. Additionally, workers need make no additional contribution for their family health care benefits.

One striking worker held up a copy of “The Teamster Rebellion” by Farrell Dobbs, about how that union leader and revolutionary socialist organized truckers in Minneapolis. He said he’s reading the book because “it teaches you about how the union started. I wanna learn more. I wanna have more power. I want more people to have a union. Because without a union, we’re going to lose power in this country. So the more knowledge I get, the better I become.” Inspirational words indeed! Congratulations to Teamster Local #202 members. (Leftvoice.org, Jan. 22)

CWA battles Lumen Tech

Jeff Storey, multimillionaire CEO of Lumen Technologies, provides another example of corporate U.S. giving lip service to the Black Lives Matter movement. During the uprising against police terror and racism last year, Storey said that “we must be against racism and violence against Black People” and “value our differences as strengths for unification.” Empty words considering that Lumen Tech designated Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a paid holiday for non-union employees only.

Union workers at Lumen (formerly known as CenturyLink) are represented by CWA Local 7777 in Denver, Colo. A delegation of African American workers from the Communications Workers petitioned Storey, asking that he designate the federal MLK Day as a paid holiday for all Lumen workers. The letter was signed by 1,500 Lumen employees and community supporters. The union requests that Storey and Lumen management meet with them regarding racism at Lumen. (tinyurl.com/y6l979xg)

This action reflects the upsurge in tech-industry labor organizing over the past year. The pandemic crisis has sharpened the focus on who is an essential worker — and the tech industry is included. As tech giants’ profits explode, like Lumen, Amazon and Google’s, workers are demanding more rights and a larger share of the pie. □

Buffalo, N.Y.

Defiant protesters challenge the Biden administration

By Arjae Red
Buffalo, N.Y.

Jan. 21 — On Biden’s first full day as president of the U.S. empire, activists and community members here wasted no time in putting pressure on his administration. At a demonstration called by Workers World Party-Buffalo, people gathered at the corner of Niagara Street and Porter Avenue to voice their demands.

Activist David Louis spoke of the need for protesters to stop asking Biden for change and instead organize for the change we want ourselves — highlighting the fact that many basic demands for equality have been raised for hundreds of years, and neither major political party has acted on these changes.

Demands raised today included ending all wars and sanctions, ending the blockade on Cuba, closing prisons

and abolishing ICE and the police, immediate COVID relief for workers, Medicare for All, paid sick leave, cancellation of rent and student loan debt, the end of all fracking and oil pipeline construction, and free unrestricted access to abortion.

The exciting lineup of speakers from many organizations and causes included India Walton, local activist and a mayoral candidate; labor organizer Mary Lister from Queen City Workers center; activist and mental health care advocate Shaima Aakil; anti-police violence activist Myles Carter; immigrant activist Kawiye Jumale; LGBTQ+ activist Ezra Echo from Workers World Party; Marie Schuster and Chuck Culhane from the Western New York Peace Center and more.

Based on Biden’s 40 year record, it’s clear the Biden administration will not proactively fight for measures that would benefit the working class. Any substantial



WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

gains desired by workers and oppressed peoples will need to be fought for as hard as they were fought for under Trump — if not harder. □

Workers rally vs. racism and fascism

By Judy Greenspan
San Francisco

On Inauguration Day, workers rallied against racism and fascism outside



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

San Francisco City Hall. Organized by the United Front Committee for a Labor Party, Freedom Socialist Party and Workers World Party, the rally became a speak-out for a wide variety of working and oppressed people from the U.S. and around the world.

Speakers included gig workers, health care workers, prisoners’ rights activists, former prisoners, Indigenous defenders and those fighting U.S.-funded fascism in countries like the Philippines.

Fátima Garcia, Secretary of the Sacramento Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (AFL-CIO) and Change to Win chapter, paid tribute to women and Indigenous workers. “I want to acknowledge the women in the labor movement, who do not get recognized ever in history.” Garcia added, “It has always been the

working class, the poor, the oppressed, the people who have experienced genocide, the Indigenous people.” Garcia expressed solidarity with the Black Lives Matter Movement and the struggle for im/migrant rights.

Many speakers blasted the Jan. 6 attempted racist coup, while also expressing skepticism that the new Biden administration will act in the interests of working people. Rhonda Ramiro, Chairperson of BAYAN, USA, stated: “We know that a change of president doesn’t equate to change on

the ground for the people who are trying to eke out a living. ... We know that it takes people like us, workers, to continue organizing in the streets, in the halls — not just asking for change, but demanding it.” □



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

Biden appoints warmongers

Continued from page 1

is loaded with other former top Democratic national security and foreign policy officials who raised money for the Biden campaign, have joined his transition team or have served as unofficial advisers. Many other consultants are expected to receive Biden appointments. (tinyurl.com/y2hydkdm)

Think-tank war hawks

There are a variety of other think-tank and strategic consulting firms that provide extremely well-funded positions for government officials — both Republicans and Democrats — between government appointments. The role of these think tanks is to develop a well-vetted and experienced staff who are on-call to serve corporate power both inside government and out.

A 2020 report from the Center for International Policy found that defense contractors, as well as U.S. government national security and defense agencies, contributed more than \$1 billion to 50 of the most influential U.S. think tanks over the last five years. (tinyurl.com/y45jkd52)

Other recent think-tank appointees by Biden include Kathleen Hicks as deputy secretary of defense. She served as senior vice president of CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies), the most hawkish think tank in Washington. CSIS is funded by and acts as an “influence center” for giant military industries such as BAE Systems, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman. Hicks opposes the drawdown of U.S. troops from South Korea, Afghanistan and Syria.

Kurt Campbell — chairman of The Asia Group, a “strategy and capital advisory” think tank — has been appointed to the newly created position of National Security Council Indo-Pacific coordinator. Campbell, as

the former deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, was considered the architect of Obama’s “Pivot to Asia.” This was a provocative policy of repositioning missile batteries, troops and aircraft carriers to encircle China and threaten the DPRK. His new role as Biden’s “Asia Czar” is to integrate anti-China strategy and strengthen U.S. alliances in the region.

The naming of Victoria Nuland as under secretary of state is especially revealing of Biden’s militarist policy. Nuland has served as the CEO of CNAS (Center for New American Security), another well-funded military think tank. She has also been with the Albright Stonebridge Group, a think tank set up by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. Nuland served in both the Bush-Cheney administration and the Obama-Biden administration.

Under the latter administration, as assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, Nuland bragged that she helped engineer the 2014 fascist coup that overthrew the elected government of Ukraine, using \$5 billion in funding from National Endowment for Democracy.

All these appointees promoted U.S. wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya; starvation sanctions on Venezuela, North Korea and Iran; and U.S. plans to reinforce NATO against Russia, surround the DPRK and especially threaten China militarily and economically.

These appointments contradict those liberal and social democratic forces who argued that Biden could be pushed into progressive policies by left pressure.

Wars abroad — and wars at home

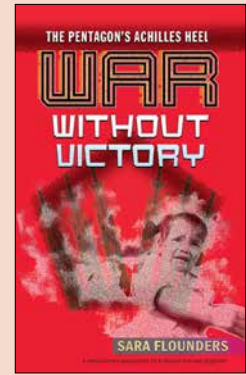
Within 24 hours of Biden’s inauguration, a large convoy of U.S. military supported by helicopter gunships headed

into Syria from Iraq, according to the SANA, the Syrian state news agency. The convoy of 40 trucks, loaded with weapons and logistical materials, reinforced illegal bases in the area. Tons of U.S. heavy equipment were observed travelling toward U.S. positions at the Conoco oil and gas field. This aggression continues the direct imperialist theft of Syria’s oil resources and is intended to disrupt Syria’s efforts to rebuild and provide for its war-torn population. (tinyurl.com/y3tor8fq)

This convoy movement showed the Biden administration’s rush to affirm its absolute commitment to ruthlessly enforce U.S. imperialist interests, within a “two-party system” unified in serving U.S. capitalism.

U.S. wars provided guaranteed profits and lucrative military contracts stretching back through decades to banks and military industries. The trillions for endless war leaves working people in the U.S. holding empty promises, while they struggle and die in the surge of the COVID-19 virus, in the grip of racist police and under the collapsing infrastructure of an economy in crisis.

The trillions spent on war for profit could easily alleviate all these crises and give health, housing and hope to the millions of U.S. working and oppressed people. □



WAR WITHOUT VICTORY
by Sara Flounders

“By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity.”

– Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann,
President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009;
Foreign Minister, Nicaragua’s Sandinista government.

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Fighting fascism

‘Political education is crucial for people’

Excerpts from the Jan. 14 Workers World Party webinar, “Workers Can Defeat Fascism and Racism,” moderated by Ted Kelly. Tania Siddiqi spoke from the WWP Houston branch. To view the entire panel discussion, go to youtu.be/d9_NDIKTovw.

Ted Kelly: Comrades, I wanted to talk about why the bourgeoisie needs fascism, and what that means. I do want to ask comrades about this white, fascist movement that attacked the Capitol Jan. 6.

Tania Siddiqi: It’s really important for people to note certain conversations that are taking place within their networks or outside of their networks. And it’s really important for people to pay attention to their own response to what happened at the Capitol. I think it’s something that all the panelists saw coming; I was very surprised at the level of white-supremacist violence that was overt. And then the response being “Okay, well, we’re just gonna resume doing whatever it is that we were doing.”

I’m in law school — and a lot of lawyers are the gatekeepers of the oppressor’s power. When I saw this on the news, I wondered how this would empower people, not just to say things in class, but the sort of work they would do outside of class. There’s an organization at my school called the Federalist Society. I now see discourse arising, validating white-supremacist violence. There was actually a question in class about whether a white supremacist should be allowed to practice law. And someone was making the argument, “Yes, absolutely.”

I think [the attack on the Capitol is] an act of desperation by the ruling class, because you see how capitalism is in decline, and right now they’re doing whatever they can to maintain their power.

In India, you have a lot of sectarian violence — Muslims being targeted, primarily by [Prime Minister] Modi’s administration. (tinyurl.com/y6g4x76t) And that was present at the Capitol. You saw Indian flags there!

And there was a lot of discourse I saw saying [of those flags], “Well, who does

this person support?” But it’s clear, because of Trump and Modi’s relationship, and how closely the U.S. is now working with India, building up its energy sector — or at least looking like they’re building up their energy sector.

All this is to maintain a level of power. You can see violence across the border in Pakistan. I recently wrote about the Hazara people in Balochistan in Pakistan — how they’re targeted and the

ongoing genocide on their community. (tinyurl.com/y37orwgn) That’s a form of sectarian violence.

The Hazara people belong to the Shia community. Pakistan is a predominantly Sunni country. If you’re following where the resources are and where the money goes — coal, granite and different minerals that are very precious are extracted from Balochistan and then transported to the more wealthy portions of the country. But the Hazara people never see any of that wealth. It’s very easy to disappear workers.

That’s why it’s so important for workers to really mobilize now. You can see that there’s an attack on our class, and the fascists will go to any means in order to maintain their position.

Ted: Fascism is the sledgehammer the capitalist wields to smash up the working class. To fight fascism is to fight the person wielding the sledgehammer.

Tania: It’s really important for us to construct what fighting fascism means. With our education system in the U.S., we don’t learn history as it truly is. One thing to talk about whenever raising class consciousness is that political education is huge. It is important for people to understand that joining an organization will provide those materials, right? In order to understand the U.S. position as an imperialist nation — what does that mean? Look at that from a historical perspective and draw lines connecting that to what we see today.

Ted: That’s such a crucial point. I’ve learned more in my time in the WWP — from comrades, through our newspaper, through the books that we put out, through struggle in the streets — than I learned through years of schooling.

Tania: School never taught me about the MOVE bombing [by the Philadelphia police]. Once I joined the party, that’s when I started learning. Even the Free Mumia movement, I did not know about that before talking to comrades. So political education is crucial for people. For instance, whenever we’re talking about police abolition, it’s important to understand how police only serve a ruling class. And what are they protecting? Only private property! To contextualize that, it’s important to look at the formation of the police from patrols [enforcing] chattel slavery and then talk about modern-day policing, the modern-day enslavement of human beings in the carceral state in this country.

Ted: It is never off topic to discuss the police when we’re talking about fascism! And I grew up in Philadelphia; I went to



Tania Siddiqi

public schools there. Not once in any of my classes did I learn about Mumia Abu-Jamal or the bombing of the MOVE organization.

Tania: In the midst of a global pandemic, people can feel very isolated, because we aren’t organizing like we would without COVID-19. But I’m hoping that people who may not be WWP members — or maybe you are someone who hasn’t worked with the party — you can build where you are.

And listen to what you’re feeling, because you should not be working ’til death. Literally, if you think about how Amazon workers are treated, this is not something that is human!

If you feel this way, and there are questions that you have — not just your political education, but maybe you want to help organize workers in your community or at your job, wherever you are — then reach out, because there will be someone, a group of people from our party, who will help you build.

It’s really crucial that you join a party and build the organization that you join — hopefully Workers World Party — because what is happening in this time is something to be taken seriously. □

Why the bourgeoisie needs fascism

Excerpts taken from the Jan. 14 webinar, “Workers Can Defeat Fascism and Racism,” sponsored by Workers World Party, moderated by Ted Kelly. Tom Answeeney spoke from the WWP Buffalo branch. To view the entire panel discussion, go to youtu.be/d9_NDIKTovw.

Ted Kelly: Comrades, we want to talk about why the bourgeoisie needs fascism.



Tom Answeeney

Tom Answeeney: We’ve seen the steady escalation of fascist violence over the past four years [during the Trump presidency]. So in some ways, the attack in Washington on Jan. 6 was predictable.

These forces were willing to break with capitalist “democratic” norms — if we can even call them democratic! Really just those of a liberal representative democracy under capitalism. They were willing

to go in and just let all that shit happen. That surprised me. I would have expected five people to die on the streets, but not inside this building that is supposed to represent the U.S. across the world.

The attack reminded me of the Beer Hall putsch [a 1923 failed coup by Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler and others in Munich, Germany, during the Weimar Republic]. In that sense, maybe it shouldn’t have surprised me, as someone who’s read some history, but seeing it happen now, in my lifetime, is uncomfortable.

Ted: Why is it that the working class is the class best suited to defeat fascism?

Tom: The reason why only the working class can defeat fascism is that the material basis on which fascism exists is opposition to the working class, which is the primary antagonist to fascism.

The bourgeoisie don’t have anything to gain from defeating fascism. They may be able to gain from reining it in, from keeping it corralled, from keeping it in their pocket until they need it to be a little bit more out there and a little bit scarier. But they never want to get rid of it entirely. They’d be disarming themselves.

Ted: We have been talking about what working people need to do. Should we wait for Biden to save us?

Tom: Biden obviously can’t be relied upon for anything, nor the Democratic National Committee. Whatever resources they are promising to use to limit the threat of fascism, they will use, in fact, against the left.

We’ve seen minimal arrests from those involved in the storming of the Capitol — even fewer than I would have expected, considering how the bourgeoisie’s own democratic norms have been torn apart.

The dominant narrative coming from DNC leadership is one of unity and bipartisanship. They stand for nothing, and they certainly won’t stand up for us. So we need to defend ourselves.

We need to organize; we need to study; we need to make friends and allies and

coalitions, because it’s not just the communists whose neck is on the line. It’s the whole working class, and it’s oppressed

people. It’s anarchists; it’s people who are liberal — and any of the working class inconveniently in the way of the fascists. The super-exploitation inflicted upon some sectors of the working class makes the entire class weaker. We need to organize against racism!

We need to be prepared to defend people acting outside the law. And understand that the law itself is there to stop us.

When fascists came to Buffalo and organized and demonstrated in Cazenovia Park, some people beat the crap out of fascists. But I certainly wasn’t going to let the cops hurt those people. I wasn’t going to do anything to uphold a legalist stance in fighting fascism, unlike liberals who were present.

That’s what we do as communists. And we understand that bourgeois law does not protect us and is primarily used against us. □

The bourgeoisie don’t have anything to gain from defeating fascism. They may be able to gain from reining it in, from keeping it corralled, from keeping it in their pocket until they need it to be a little bit more out there and a little bit scarier. But they never want to get rid of it entirely. They’d be disarming themselves.

On Roe v Wade anniversary

Anti-abortion extremists attack clinic

By Kathy Durkin

This article is in memory of Sue Davis, a decades-long reproductive justice activist who every year in this newspaper commemorated the Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion.

In the early morning hours of Jan. 22, shots were fired at the reproductive health clinic in Knoxville, Tenn., operated by Planned Parenthood of Tennessee and North Mississippi. The date is significant, because on that day in 1973, the Supreme Court of the United States issued its decision in Roe v. Wade legalizing abortion.

In essence, it said women have the fundamental right to make their own decisions about whether or not to terminate unintended pregnancies, free of governmental interference. However, this date is often targeted by anti-abortion forces as a time to attack reproductive health providers.

Since SCOTUS handed down its ruling in Roe, reactionaries have tried through legal means — in the legislatures, courts and by government edicts — to weaken and ultimately overturn the court’s decision and prohibit abortions. When legal means haven’t succeeded — or haven’t occurred quickly enough — these right-wing extremists have resorted to vandalism against reproductive health facilities, stalking and harassing staff members and hounding clients to scare them away.

Thousands of violent acts have been committed against abortion providers since 1977, including 42 bombings and 189 acts of arson. And they are escalating. Anti-abortion extremists have attacked and beaten medical personnel. In the worst-case scenarios, they murdered 11 people — doctors and other clinic staff, volunteers and escorts. (National Abortion Federation)

Fortunately, no one was injured in this latest attack, the first to target the Knoxville facility. But the front

glass doors were marred, and bullets hit the reception area. Reacting with courage and determination to the attempts to intimidate them, clinic staff planned to reopen the health center on Jan. 25, after closing it over the Jan. 23-24 weekend. They know the services they provide are essential.

Significantly, this facility provides services for women and people of all gender identities. Medication abortions via pills, now under fierce attack by reactionary forces in and out of government, are among the services available there.

Ashley Coffield, president and CEO of this Planned Parenthood affiliate, explained: “We believe it is no coincidence that this act occurred on the Roe v. Wade anniversary. Planned Parenthood, along with our allies and other health care providers, have long known the violent consequences of inflammatory, hateful rhetoric. Just as hateful rhetoric incited this month’s attack against our democratic processes, we have seen how hateful rhetoric inspires violence against reproductive health care providers.” (wkrn.com, Jan. 22)

Coffield was right to link the Jan. 6 racist, right-wing siege of the Capitol in Washington, D.C., to the violence against abortion providers.

Anti-abortion extremists join white supremacists

Erin Matson, executive director of Reproaction, a reproductive justice direct action group, stated in an article entitled “Anti-Abortion Activists Were All Over the Capitol Riots” that “Anti-abortion agitators have been calling and supporting [Trump’s] call to storm Washington for some time.” As more photos are analyzed, she said, “we’ll see more and more overlap between the anti-abortion movement and the white supremacists” who invaded the Capitol building. (Vice News, Jan. 12)

Renee Bracey Sherman is the African American



Washington, D.C.

founder of We Testify, an organization dedicated to the leadership and representation of people who have had abortions. She emphasized: “What frustrates me is that if you had been paying attention to the white supremacists and how they were attacking abortion clinics and treating people who spoke out in support of abortion, none of this would be a surprise to you.”

At least 15 anti-abortion extremists were identified as being in the Capitol siege, says the Abortion Access Front, which fights for safe, dignified and affordable reproductive health care and rights for women and people of all gender identities. Advocates for reproductive health, rights and justice “were not surprised” to see anti-abortion agitators invade the Capitol to support the white supremacist in chief, former President Donald Trump. (Prism, Jan. 22)

Several progressive and even some corporate media reported that known anti-abortion agitators were in the Capitol on Jan. 6. But, says Prism, this isn’t just about the appearance of individuals in the attempted coup: “Many reproductive justice advocates have argued that the anti-abortion movement is a white-supremacist movement, but ... in recent years [its] many iterations have made inroads with extreme right-wing groups — including militia movements and white supremacist groups.” □

Toward an anti-imperialist feminism

By Devin Cole

This lightly edited speech was delivered at the zoom rally of the Pensacola Women’s March on Jan. 23.

Over the last four years, capitalism has gone further into a tailspin from which it will not recover. Capitalism has been in free fall since the end of World War II — and some would argue since before then. But the last 75 years have proven the most disastrous, coming out of the Great Depression and then setting up the Cold War, which lasted until the 1990s.

Linked arm-in-arm with capitalism is imperialism, or the violent systematic control and exploitation of poor economies by finance capital, colonialist plundering and oftentimes war, initiated by wealthy capitalist countries. In these instances, there is great resistance from the people of the countries being invaded and exploited, and these campaigns of resistance, which can last decades, are often led by women.

Imperialist attacks bring heightened amounts of violence against women in the countries being exploited and invaded, be it physical, economic, sexual or any other form of abuse. For the abuse by U.S. soldiers, we can look at this country’s invasion of Vietnam and the extreme sexual violence against women there, all the way to the U.S. invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Just weeks ago, in one of the more horrific moments of Trump’s final days in office — he pardoned four Blackwater mercenaries who had killed 17 Iraqi citizens, many of them women, in the 2007 Nisour Square massacre. In the 2005 Haditha massacre, a group of Marines killed 24 Iraqi citizens — again, many of them women, some with infants.

Women across the world are exploited in countries victimized by imperialism — but especially by U.S. imperialism. Despite this, there is continued resistance. In 2001, the RAWA (Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan) opposed the U.S./NATO invasion of their country with numerous marches and rallies. At one point, they threatened to sue the U.S. government for unauthorized use of photos of women from their website that the U.S. shamelessly used to attempt

to justify war in Afghanistan!

All of this has been done in the name of U.S. patriotism — a camouflage for U.S. imperialism.

The trap of ‘feminist’ patriotism

Over these last four years, we have seen the rise of a U.S. liberal-feminist movement which opposed the fascistic policies and actions of the now-ousted Trump administration. But tangled up with this “resistance” was also a the unabashed declaration of U.S. patriotism — with many progressives believing that they were true patriots, while the Trump administration was traitorous to the U.S.

This position shouldn’t come as a surprise. Liberal feminism, which is typically guided by middle-class white women, is often paternalistic, patronizing and — more than they realize — actually hostile towards colonized and oppressed women, particularly Black women. Some liberal feminists relate to these women as “lesser” women to be saved, rather than as leaders in the struggle to advance the abolition of patriarchy.

So liberal feminists’ tying together of feminism and patriotism, rooted in imperialism and white supremacy, should come as no surprise. That does not make it any less alarming and harmful.

During the second Gulf War — which began with the 2003 U.S. attack of Iraq — feminist scholars like Naomi Wolf praised the presence of women in the U.S. military, viewing this as propelling women’s rights forward. What is omitted in this view is the estimated nearly quarter of a million Iraqi people killed in the ground war alone — and the millions killed in the destabilized region since then.

Women’s liberation cannot be achieved at the expense of lives lost in war or through the plundering of other nations by imperialism and colonialism. Patriotism is not what will propel women’s liberation. In fact, “patriotism” drags liberation back — toward right-wing reaction.

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Women’s liberation and anti-imperialism

Women everywhere must be liberated not just from patriarchy, but from other oppressive and intertwined systems: racism, white supremacy, capitalism, colonialism and imperialism. Struggling against these issues simultaneously must be at the core of a true

Women’s Liberation Movement. For women to serve an imperialist empire in the name of “patriotism” ultimately harms millions of colonized women, working-class women and oppressed women, including transgender women and disabled women.

The Women’s Liberation Movement must ultimately be led by colonized and oppressed women and must contain an anti-imperialist line as its nucleus. Women’s liberation must link the anti-war movement and its own organizing to demand an end to endless bloody wars — and an end to all sanctions and blockades on other countries that also harm millions of women. The trillions of dollars invested into the U.S. war machine must instead be given to the people.

This is the struggle that will truly liberate women from oppression. Everyone must say: Stop U.S./NATO! No sanctions, no wars! Shut down the Pentagon and all military bases abroad! Say no to imperialist feminism!

Devin Cole is a transgender Marxist organizer and writer. They are the president of Strive (Socialist Trans Initiative), a transgender advocacy organization in northwest Florida, and a member of the Workers World Party — Central Gulf Coast (Alabama, Florida and Mississippi) branch.”

More than just baseball

Hank Aaron’s legacy

By Monica Moorehead

Henry “Hank” Aaron may not have played the same historical role as the great Jackie Robinson, who broke the color line in Major League Baseball in 1947, but “Hammerin’ Hank” achieved remarkable records that continue to stand the test of time. Plus his legacy has transcended the sport he played for 25 years in total.

When he died of natural causes on Jan. 22 at the age of 86, Aaron still held the number two spot for most home runs at 755 behind Barry Bonds. He remains number one in total bases (6,856) and runs batted in (2,297); number two in at-bats (12,364), behind Pete Rose; and number two in hits (3,771), behind Rose and Ty Cobb.

Aaron played in the all-Black Negro Leagues until he joined MLB’s then-Milwaukee “Braves” that won the 1957 World Series and eventually moved to Atlanta. That same year, Aaron was named the league’s most valuable player. He was a 25-time All-Star before he retired in 1976. In 1982, he was inducted into the Baseball Home of Fame with the second highest percentage of votes ever, after Cobb.

But even with all these great accomplishments, this incredible ballplayer faced tremendous racist backlash, especially as he approached breaking the 714 home-run record of the legendary New York Yankee, Babe Ruth. Aaron, who experienced racism firsthand growing up in Mobile, Ala., received 3,000 letters a day for almost a year, dripping with horrendous racist venom including death threats against him and his family.

These white supremacists could not stomach the fact that a Black ballplayer was about to rupture the most storied record in baseball, held for almost 40 years by arguably the greatest MLB home run hitter of all time — who happens to be white. When Aaron broke Ruth’s record on April 8, 1974, the white MLB Commissioner Bowie Kuhn was not present in the stands — an insult — for this historic feat.

As Aaron was running the bases after breaking the record, two young white men ran on the field. Luckily it was to pat Aaron on the back and congratulate him. They could have easily been two racists who might have caused him great physical harm or worse. Why was there not security organized for him, given the duress he was enduring for months?

Twenty years after his home run feat, Aaron admitted to a Black sports columnist, William C. Rhoden, “April 8, 1974,

really led up to turning me off on baseball. It really made me see for the first time a clear picture of what this country is about. My kids had to live like they were in prison because of kidnap threats, and I had to live like a pig in a slaughter camp. I had to duck.

“I had to go out the back door of the ballparks. I had to have a police escort with me all the time. I was getting threatening letters every single day. All of these things have put a bad taste in my mouth, and it won’t go away. They carved a piece of my heart away.” (New York Times, April 1994)

But Aaron never feared political controversy. According to CubaNews, “Aaron visited Cuba in 1996 and witnessed a game between Pinar del Rio and Industriales of the Selective Series that year, at the Capitán San Luis stadium, and fraternized with the players of both teams.” (Jan. 22)

How best to honor Aaron’s legacy?

Aaron was not a political activist like his contemporary, Muhammad Ali, or today’s Colin Kaepernick, but he was an important symbol for civil rights with his endurance and determination. He not only wanted to see more African American baseball players, he wanted to see more African American general managers, team executives and even team owners.

As of 2020, less than 8% of MLB players are African American compared to 57.5% white and 32% Latinx. In 1978, there were 27% Black players. There have only been 15 Black general managers in MLB history. One explanation given for this huge discrepancy was in a tweet from ESPN’s Howard Bryant: “Every Black manager ever hired in MLB history has been an ex-player, which means every successful Black candidate has first needed to have been one of the 750 best players in the world.” (Jan. 7)

The numbers are even worse when it comes to the National Football League, where at least 75% of the players are African American. Yet out of 30 teams, there are only two Black head coaches — the Pittsburgh Steelers’ Mike Tomlin and the Miami Dolphins’ Brian Flores. There is one Latinx coach, the Washington Football Team’s Ron Rivera, and the New York Jets head coach Robert Saleh is of Lebanese descent.

Sports under capitalism mirrors the rest of society, which is riddled with all forms of inequality, especially racism. And just as it took mass struggle to change the team names and eliminate racist mascots that degraded Indigenous peoples in Washington and Cleveland, it will take



Hank Aaron

even more struggle to achieve similar concessions from Aaron’s Atlanta team and the Kansas City “Chiefs” football team.

The women and men players from the National Basketball Association led the way in fighting racism this summer. They

refused to play in playoff games to protest racist police brutality following the shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha, Wis., which left him paralyzed.

These kinds of bold actions will help keep Aaron’s legacy alive. □

Incarcerated subscribers receive WW free

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This is an update on the status of Workers World newspaper. Our print edition has been temporarily suspended during the COVID-19 crisis for health and safety reasons. However, we are thrilled to announce we have resumed print once a month, for the time being.

We have received reports from our incarcerated siblings, like Bryant Arroyo at S.C.I. Frackville in Pennsylvania and Michael “Spider” Gonzales at the Polunsky Unit in Texas, that there was audible joy when our most recent print issue was delivered inside to our

incarcerated subscribers!

Our ability to break through the walls of isolation imposed by capitalists holding the keys to these cages is made possible by your generous support. Workers World Party is dedicated to providing subscriptions to incarcerated members of our class for free. If you’re interested in supporting this mission of providing revolutionary socialist and abolitionist news and analysis to all our family behind bars, please go to patreon.com/wwp to donate today! □

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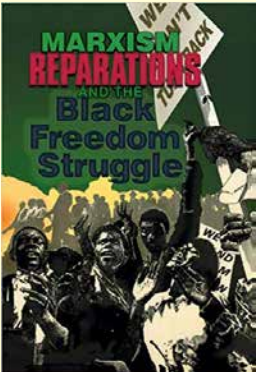
Attica, 1971

Marxism, Reparations & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper.
Edited by Monica Moorehead.

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination ♦ Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery ♦ Black Youth: Repression & Resistance ♦ The Struggle for Socialism Is Key ♦ Domestic Workers United Demand Passage of a Bill of Rights ♦ Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice! ♦ Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior ♦ Racism & Poverty in the Delta ♦ Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions ♦ Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation ♦ Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion

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COVER GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON

Not ‘individualism’ vs. ‘authoritarianism’ It’s capitalism vs. socialism

The U.S. continues to lead the world in COVID fatalities with over 400,000 deaths.

The mass vaccination effort has gotten off to a disastrous start. Every state has its own protocols, and in some states every county has a different process. Appointments must often be made online, which shuts out many seniors and others lacking internet access or skills.

Vaccination sites are running out of vaccines, while millions of doses sit in storage.

Ex-President Trump deserves some of the blame. But even President Biden’s announced plan for 150 million vaccinations in 100 days would still leave much of the country’s population unprotected by May 1.

The numbers are a damning indictment of for-profit health care and the whole profit system.

Meanwhile, “China has largely brought the virus under control, even as the rest of the world struggles with mounting deaths and overburdened hospitals.” (France 24, Jan. 20) Closer to home, “Cuba is creating capacity to produce 100 million doses of the Soberana 02 injectable vaccine against COVID-19.” (Granma, Jan. 22) This is a service to the rest of the world. Cuba’s population is just over 11.3 million people.

Why has the world’s richest imperialist power failed to contain the pandemic, while socialist China, Cuba and Vietnam are succeeding? U.S. capitalists have a lot of explaining to do.

Hence the ideological offensive to create an alternative explanation for U.S. capitalism’s failings compared to China’s success. According to the commercial media, it is not because of fundamental differences between the two economic systems. Instead, it’s all about two different cultures — one “authoritarian” and the other “individualistic.”

A number of commentaries in the New York Times, an authoritative mouthpiece of the ruling class, replay this theme like a broken record. “China’s authoritarian government has the ability to act in a way that democracies that must be accountable to the public cannot.” (Oct. 30, 2020) “China’s authoritarian system, proponents say, is not just different from the West’s democracies, it is also proving itself superior.” (Dec. 14, 2020) And again: “Does the deepening of cracks in America’s political system actually boost the legitimacy of China and other authoritarian regimes?” (Jan. 15)

They won’t dare acknowledge that socialist countries, where health care for profit is prohibited — and human needs come before the corporate bottom line — are succeeding because their economic system is superior.

Marx on ‘individual freedom’

In the “Communist Manifesto” of 1848, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote: “Owing to the extensive use of machinery, and to the division of labor, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently,

all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required. ... The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.” Of course, direct capitalist exploitation extends to workers of all genders and all gender identities.

Capitalism’s much-heralded “individualism” is really just the “right” of individual capitalists to score billions in profits at the expense of workers — individually and collectively.

Working-class and oppressed people — the overwhelming majority — are subject to the authoritarian despotism of the owning class. Finding time and energy for individual self-expression is difficult after spending most of our waking hours at grueling jobs, such as driving for Uber or working in Amazon’s warehouses.

And these days, “individual freedom” means choosing between going to work and becoming infected with COVID, or not going to work and being fired.

Capitalist politicians — Republican and Democrat — have even blocked the creation of a national single-payer health care system, popularly characterized as “Medicare for All.” This and the lack of centralized planning have led to disastrous and deadly results.

No, this isn’t a culture problem. Capitalism has failed, and socialism is the only solution. □

A question about the stock market

A reader recently asked us why the stock market is still going up when the economy is being battered by the COVID pandemic.

Good question! Of course, by the time you read this, the market may be falling. It’s all a gamble.

While all kinds of “experts” try to figure out how to make money on the stock market, no one has come up with a reliable formula that can predict how long a boom will last before there’s a bust. That’s because the market does not directly reflect how the economy is doing. What it does reflect is how much confidence investors have in the market, which is a different thing altogether.

A lot of the time stock prices rise just because more money is being poured into the stock market, regardless of how well the economy itself is doing. In fact, if people with money for various reasons don’t invest it directly into businesses, they may move that money into the stock market, thus driving up stock prices.

That could be part of the reason stocks are rising right now, even as much economic activity is on hold because of the pandemic.

Capitalism is full of contradictions that can spell disaster for the working class. That’s why we’re fighting for a socialist future, where the means of production are owned collectively by the working people, and the economy is planned to satisfy human need, not billionaires’ greed.

— Deirdre Griswold

Rubin Kanowitz ipresente!



Rubin Kanowitz at April 21, 2012 protest of mass incarceration at Apollo Theater in Harlem, N.Y.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

We are sad to have to announce that Rubin Kanowitz, a member of Workers World Party who had been continuously active since 1965, died at home on Jan. 20 from complications of COVID-19. Rubin and his friends grew up hanging around candy stores in East New York in the 1930s and 1940s. He was active in the Civil Rights Movement in Brooklyn even before joining the Party. He participated in all Party activities, from street protests

to court battles to hosting socials, which he did with his spouse, Joyce Kanowitz. He was especially known for his warmth and generosity toward his comrades, his enchantment with their children and his anger against the ruling class. A more complete obituary and memory of his outstanding contributions to the class struggle will appear in WW in the near future. □

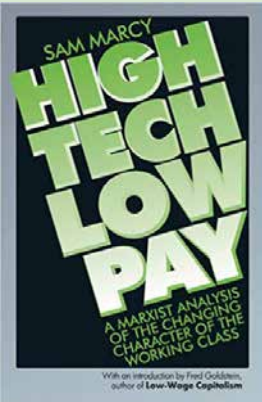
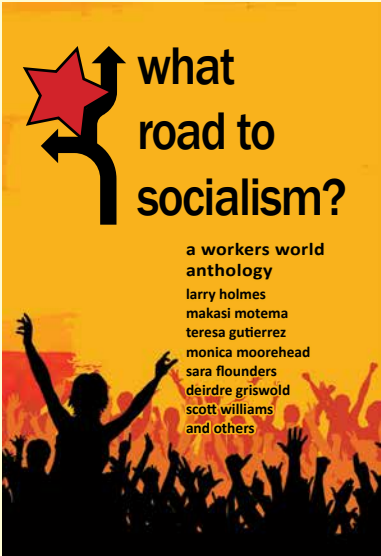
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By Sam Marcy
with an updated introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of *Low Wage Capitalism*.

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Tunisia

Arab Spring 10 years old, people take the streets

By G. Dunkel

Ten years ago the Arab Spring — a vast mass movement that swept through the Arab world, shaking up all sorts of governments in Arab countries — began Dec. 18, 2010, after Mohamed Bouazizi, who sold fruit on the street, set himself on fire to protest his disrespectful treatment from Tunisian police.

His comrades on the street recorded the incident on their phones and posted on social media in Sidi Bouzid, a small city in the center of Tunisia. The video quickly went viral, and soon tens of thousands of Tunisians — men, women, youth — were in the streets, night after night, chanting for “liberty, dignity, jobs.”

Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, then the very corrupt president of Tunisia, fled to Saudi Arabia Jan. 14, 2011. That is the date the Tunisian government celebrates as the beginning of the Arab Spring, but the people of Tunisia regard the martyrdom of Bouazizi as its start.

In much of the Arab world, the Arab Spring has faded into memories of past struggles. Tahrir Square in Cairo, where hundreds of thousands of Egyptians gathered in protests for months, has been turned into a pharaonic

showcase by the current al-Sisi government. But in Tunisia, where a functioning parliamentary system has taken root, it is still commemorated.

This past December there were big demonstrations in the smaller cities of southern and central Tunisia, according to video reports from Agence France Presse, putting forward the 2011 slogans “liberty, dignity, jobs.” This is the area of Tunisia where the Arab-Berber, Bedouin, Tunisians are concentrated. Southern Tunisia historically was a major terminus for trans-Saharan caravans.

The sister of Mohamed Bouazizi gave an interview to AFP explaining that people wanted more from the Arab



Tunisians say the 2011 revolution continues.

Spring. The people certainly appreciated and used the “liberty” that was won during the Arab Spring. But wages are going down, and prices are up. It’s difficult to find a job even with a good degree. Life is becoming harder than it was under Ben Ali.

Mass unemployment fuels new protests

According to the International Monetary Fund, around 30% of Tunisians between the ages of 24 and 39 are unemployed, and Tunisia’s GDP declined by 11.5% in 2020. The demonstrations during December brought out whole families, some waving loaves of bread.

Tourism has been a big part of Tunisia’s economy. Tunisia has a long and colorful history from Classical times — when Rome was contesting Carthage over control of the western Mediterranean Sea — to the Ottoman occupation to present-day resistance. The ruins of Carthage are a short train ride from Tunis. The beautiful beaches, gorgeous scenery and excellent cuisine were a tourist draw.

But then COVID-19 hit.

Tunisia’s public health system was and is not prepared for the influx of cases. The government imposed a lockdown and arrested 400 people in March for violating rules, which many felt were arbitrary. COVID-19 is still a major problem.

When the government’s Arab Spring commemorations started in the middle of January, nocturnal protests broke out in almost every city and in some of the poor suburbs of Tunis, where people are piled together and COVID is rampant. Predominantly young people took to the streets, responding to the cops’ tear gas with fireworks.

The army was called out to control some of the cities — like Gafsa, where mining is a big part of the local economy.

Anywhere from 600 to 4,000 people — mainly youth — have been arrested, depending on accounts. One video clip from AFP shows a daylight confrontation between a protester and a cop. The cop pushes the protester, who pushes back, and then lets another protester defuse the situation.

The cops and the army have arrested many people who were merely participating in a demonstration. The Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail (Tunisian General Labour Union), which is the largest trade union confederation in Tunisia, has called for their release. □

Vietnam

Communist Party to hold 13th National Congress

By Paddy Colligan

Jan. 25 — The Communist Party of Vietnam is holding its 13th National Party Congress this week — a culmination of hundreds of meetings and discussions that have taken place throughout the country and at all levels of the party. It will evaluate the socioeconomic development strategies of the previous congress in 2016 and will set concrete targets and tasks for the future. The overall goal is to move Vietnam to the level of a “socialist-oriented developed country” by the middle of this century.

Development plans in Vietnam include managing the natural resources and the environment while adapting the country to climate change. Over the last five years, Vietnam’s annual average GDP growth was 6%, and the poverty rate in the country was reduced to less than 3%. These achievements have been reached despite the need to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, which the Vietnamese people have succeeded in doing with remarkable success. To date, in a population of almost 98 million people, there have been 35 deaths. (Worldometer, Jan. 25)

Workers World sent the following solidarity message to the congress:

January 14, 2021
To the Communist Party of Vietnam on the occasion of your 13th National Congress:

We are so glad to send our congratulations and highest regards to the Communist Party of Vietnam as you evaluate your past experiences and plan the future.

The review of the resolutions set at the 12th National Congress that have been guiding your policies these last five years will undoubtedly be seen against the inspiring backdrop of your stunning success in combating the ravages of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. That alone is accomplishment enough, but there were others as well, especially before the pandemic became the primary problem confronting every country of the world.

Much of the world remains ensnared in a seemingly intractable contest with SARS-CoV-2. Your success in combating this problem has shown the world that a socialist system deeply rooted in the people, such as that of Vietnam, is capable of vanquishing this 21st century enemy, just as it was able to vanquish the military and political enemies of the 20th century.

We are in solidarity with the 13th Congress as you study and evaluate your achievements and what remains to be done, as well as set goals to guide your future path. With the involvement of such a large part of the population, this is a very important period. We look forward to learning of your deliberations and future plans.

We convey our warmest solidarity and appreciation for your decades of struggle that have inspired generations of progressive people in the U.S.

Larry Holmes, First Secretary of Workers World Party
Deirdre Griswold, Editor of Workers World newspaper

Es hora que los trabajadores derroten al racismo y al fascismo — salida de Trump

Continuación de la página 12

movilización fascista masiva. Sin embargo, el movimiento fascista aún puede reclutar y actuar lejos de las concentraciones militares.

La crisis de la sociedad capitalista que alimenta el crecimiento de las ideologías fascistas y otras ideologías irracionales entre las masas no muestra signos de disminuir. El COVID-19, la crisis capitalista cíclica después de que la pandemia se haya calmado -si es que eso ocurre- y la crisis climática amenazan la estabilidad política en el

centro del imperialismo mundial. Estados Unidos sigue perdiendo prestigio y poder en todo el mundo.

Apoyarse en las fuerzas represivas del Estado para detener un brote fascista en una crisis creciente es desarmar a la clase obrera -que incluye a todos los sectores de personas que dependen de la venta de su fuerza de trabajo para sobrevivir- dejándola vulnerable.

Asumiendo una transición sin problemas al gobierno de Biden/Harris, la clase obrera y las organizaciones de derechos populares de todas las nacionalidades y géneros deben luchar por cómo organizar la autodefensa

contra el fascismo, independientemente del aparato estatal. Animamos a todos los grupos a dar los pasos necesarios.

El movimiento debe encontrar formas de apelar directamente a las tropas de base de la Guardia Nacional y del Ejército para fomentar el antifascismo y su negativa a dirigir sus armas contra los movimientos populares. Cuanto más fuerte sea el movimiento popular y más decididamente actúe, mejor podrá ganarse a los “indécisos” y neutralizar a los que estén tentados de unirse a los fascistas. □



Es hora que los trabajadores derroten al racismo y al fascismo — salida de Trump

Por John Catalinotto

18 de enero. Se espera que una cantidad sin precedentes de 25.000 efectivos de la Guardia Nacional de 50 estados, más miles de policías locales y del Capitolio, ocupen la capital de Estados Unidos el 20 de enero. El objetivo anunciado de esta fuerza armada: evitar un ataque violento en la toma de posesión del 46º presidente y permitir una transición a la administración de Joe Biden/Kamala Harris. Salida de Trump.

Las tropas de la Guardia Nacional y la policía estatal custodiaron muchos edificios del capitolio estatal el 17 de enero en previsión de las manifestaciones ultraderechistas. Pocos manifestantes fascistas se presentaron, lo que indica su actual estado de ánimo cauteloso.

A pesar de su desorganización y derrota después de tres horas, el asalto pro-fascista del 6 de enero al Capitolio sembró el terror en el Congreso y conmocionó al público. Su objetivo era detener la certificación de las elecciones presidenciales y mantener a Trump en el cargo. El ataque contó con su bendición, lo que le dio el marchamo de intento de golpe de Estado.

La falta de castigo en el acto, la aparente colaboración de elementos del aparato estatal con los fascistas y la amplia publicidad que atrajo el asalto, todo ello avivó los temores creíbles de que se pudiera lanzar un ataque aún mayor durante la toma de posesión.

Ahora, en vísperas del 20 de enero, se enfrentan dos fuerzas. Ambas fuerzas son represivas, y ambas sirven a los intereses de la clase dominante imperialista propietaria. Sin embargo, hay que distinguirlas.

Una de ellas es el poder “legal” del aparato del Estado: el ejército, la policía, los tribunales, las prisiones. El otro es la fuerza armada paramilitar “extralegal” de docenas de milicias y organizaciones fascistas, reunidas bajo la bandera de Trump y unidas por su ideología extremista de supremacía blanca.

Al margen de este enfrentamiento interno hay una tercera fuerza: el movimiento de la clase trabajadora, incluyendo Black Lives Matter, los migrantes, los sindicatos, las mujeres, los LGBTQ2S+, los ecologistas, los discapacitados, los jóvenes y todos los demás movimientos populares.

Este movimiento popular puede ser valiente y audaz y ganar un enorme apoyo, como hizo BLM el verano pasado. En este momento estos sectores están en su mayoría desarmados. Se han unido en su oposición mutua al trumpismo.

Veamos más de cerca las fuerzas de clase que se enfrentan.

La creación del aparato estatal

Los informes de Washington describen los preparativos de la Guardia Nacional y la policía para establecer una “Zona Verde”. Las fuerzas de ocupación estadounidenses en Bagdad utilizaron el mismo nombre para la zona de la capital iraquí que contiene la gigantesca embajada de Estados Unidos y otros edificios oficiales.

En la Zona Verde de Bagdad, las tropas estadounidenses establecieron cruces de automóviles, utilizaron barreras de cemento para evitar los ataques con camiones bomba a los edificios, llevaron a cabo una vigilancia continua y se prepararon para la batalla en un intento de evitar los ataques de la resistencia iraquí. La Zona Verde formaba parte de una zona de guerra; era parte de la ocupación de Irak por el imperialismo estadounidense.

La fuerza más grande en Washington, D.C., es la Guardia Nacional. Según amplios informes de los medios de comunicación, el FBI, el Servicio Secreto y las fuerzas policiales del Capitolio y de la zona metropolitana desempeñan un papel complementario. Las agencias policiales federales y locales han estado investigando y deteniendo a personas identificadas como participantes en el asalto al Capitolio.

Si bien el Congreso logró certificar la elección alrededor de las 3:45 a.m. del 7 de enero -después de volver a reunirse tras el asalto-, sin embargo 147 republicanos votaron en contra de la certificación. El hecho de que tantos republicanos se mantuvieran en la Gran Mentira de Trump sobre los resultados de las elecciones indicaba que aún contaba con un importante apoyo de la clase dirigente, a pesar de la repugnancia expresada en la mayoría de los medios de la clase dirigente.

Sin embargo, en la semana siguiente, muchas instituciones de la clase dirigente abandonaron a Trump, incluso aquellas que lo habían apoyado anteriormente. El Wall Street Journal, la Asociación Nacional de Fabricantes, el Deutsche Bank (una fuente de préstamos para las empresas de Trump) lo abandonaron, y algunos políticos republicanos abandonaron el barco.

Los monopolios de las redes sociales, como Facebook y Twitter, han impedido a Trump atraer directamente a su base. Las empresas y fundaciones que han apoyado financieramente a los candidatos republicanos prometieron cortar los fondos de aquellos que votaran en contra de la certificación.

El 12 de enero, los ocho generales que componen el Estado Mayor Conjunto del Pentágono firmaron y enviaron una carta pública a los 1,3 millones de miembros del ejército estadounidense. El comunicado condenaba los “violentos disturbios en Washington, D.C., el 6 de enero de 2021”, pedía a todas las tropas que evitaran el extremismo y dejaba clara la posición del Pentágono: “El 20 de enero de 2021, de acuerdo con la Constitución, confirmado por los estados y los tribunales, y certificado por el Congreso, el presidente electo Biden será investido y se convertirá en nuestro 46º comandante en jefe”.

El envío del mensaje a todas las tropas indica que la cúpula militar se toma en serio el hecho de que los veteranos y un puñado de tropas en servicio activo participaron en el ataque al Congreso del 6 de enero. Dado que el Ejército cuenta con un 40% de personas de color y la Guardia Nacional con un 25%, los generales temen

que la animosidad racista exacerbada destruya la cohesión de sus fuerzas.

En sentido figurado, las fuerzas de la clase dirigente tuvieron una visión de un líder de QAnon con cuernos (o incluso alguien con el pelo anaranjado) dirigiendo sus fortunas. La mayoría estuvo de acuerdo en que era una mala idea.

Las fuerzas fascistas

Una gran mayoría de la policía local de todo el país ha apoyado a Trump. Algunos policías individuales participaron en el asalto al Congreso, y muchas personas con ideología fascista buscan o son reclutadas por la policía. Aunque los agentes de policía forman parte del aparato estatal legal, son susceptibles a la ideología fascista y especialmente racista.

El 6 de enero, las principales fuerzas fascistas incluían a los Proud Boys, los Oath Keepers, Boogaloo Bois (cuyo objetivo declarado es desencadenar una guerra civil racial), diversas milicias y algunos KKK y nazis, una repetición de Charlottesville, Virginia, en agosto de 2017.

Llevar armas a las protestas, invocando la Segunda Enmienda. La ideología de la mayoría de los grupos es una mezcla de misoginia, xenofobia, antisemitismo y anticomunismo/antisocialismo, pero el tema principal que los une es la supremacía blanca.

Desde 2017 la secta QAnon, que se unió a los fascistas en el Capitolio el 6 de enero, se ha convertido en un fenómeno de masas. Apunta a políticos y líderes empresariales, en su mayoría demócratas de la institución, acusándolos sin pruebas de ese tipo de crímenes inconfesables que despiertan la repulsión de las masas. QAnon ve a Trump como su campeón, y les agradece su apoyo.

El 6 de enero, el presidente y sus compinches de pacotilla desataron esta turba impulsada por el odio contra sus rivales -incluida la presidenta de la Cámara de Representantes, Nancy Pelosi, otros demócratas e incluso el vicepresidente Mike Pence, al que consideran un traidor-. La cábala de Trump hizo esto con el apoyo tácito de la mayoría de los miembros republicanos del Congreso, que se alinearon para oponerse a la certificación de Biden.

El papel de Trump incitando al caos

La insistencia del presidente saliente jugó un papel clave. Los fascistas duros pueden estar dispuestos a correr riesgos; están diez veces más dispuestos si un presidente de Estados Unidos se lo ordena. Es una promesa tácita de impunidad. Y para los miles de personas allí presentes que no eran tan duros, el empuje presidencial fue suficiente para llevarlos a apoyar a los que estaban dispuestos a arrasar.

Lo que hizo que Trump se viera perjudicado fue que prometió que se uniría a la marcha, pero no lo hizo. El los considera a los alborotadores “basura de clase baja”.

Lo que formó una tormenta perfecta fue la colaboración de la Policía del Capitolio, cuyos dirigentes se negaron a preparar su defensa. Incluso después de que la diputada Maxine Waters les instara

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e interrogara el 31 de diciembre, no hicieron gran cosa. Sin su habitual poderío abrumador para gestionar esta protesta, algunos policías confraternizaron con los fascistas. Otros “hicieron su trabajo” protegiendo al Congreso.

El resultado: los fascistas mataron a un policía, los policías mataron a un atacante, otros tres murieron, incluyendo un atacante que los propios fascistas pisotearon. El jefe de la policía del Capitolio, Steven Sund, y otros bajo su mando, han dimitido desde entonces.

Los que incitaron el asalto, como Trump y Rudy Giuliani, lo hicieron sabiendo que una multitud que irrumpiera en el Capitolio podría herir o matar a sus oponentes políticos. Por no hablar de que una turba frenética de supremacistas blancos y misóginos podría linchar a cualquier persona de color a la que le pusieran las manos encima, por ejemplo, a las jóvenes progresistas y francas representantes de color de “la Escuadra”, como Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, que temían con razón esa amenaza.

Este tipo de pogromos ya han ocurrido antes en la historia de Estados Unidos, cuando turbas dirigidas por el KKK depusieron gobiernos locales en los que los negros ocupaban cargos, como en Wilmington, Carolina del Norte, en 1898. (tinyurl.com/y48n8pma)

A diferencia de un golpe militar para poner una junta en el poder o elegir un nuevo ejecutivo, el asalto del 6 de enero sólo necesitaba detener la certificación de la pérdida de Trump. Fue similar a los golpes de Estado respaldados por Estados Unidos en Yugoslavia en octubre de 2000 para deponer a Slobodan Milosevic y en Ucrania en febrero de 2014 para desalojar a Víctor Yanukovich, ambos basados en reclamaciones no probadas de fraude electoral, ambos ocurriendo con un demócrata en la Casa Blanca.

Asaltos fascistas similares que intimidan a los políticos en Georgia, Pensilvania y Arizona podrían haber anulado los votos de ciudades con muchos votantes afroamericanos y latinos, revertir las victorias de Biden y reelegir a Trump. En una llamada telefónica, el presidente saliente había intentado antes presionar al secretario de Estado republicana de Georgia para que “encontrara los votos” que necesitaría para borrar su derrota allí.

Parece que Trump tendrá que marcharse el 20 de enero, y podría enfrentarse a otro juicio político en el nuevo Senado.

Respuesta de la clase trabajadora

El 20 de enero es probable que la presencia masiva de tropas de la Guardia Nacional desaliente cualquier